

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 4-17 are pending. Claim 1 is currently amended. The amendment to claim 1 has been made for purposes of clarification and without narrowing the claim scope or adding new matter. Support for the amendment is provided, for example, in Applicant's specification at page 7, lines 13-16 and in Figures 1, 3, 5 and 6. Applicant believes that the amendment places the application in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application as amended.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 1 and 4-17 stand rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as purportedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify that each of the rigid segments is proximate and spaced apart from at least another of the rigid segments by at least one of the grooves. Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 1 for purported indefiniteness has been overcome, and should be withdrawn. Applicant further submits that a dependent claim should be allowed when its parent claim is allowed. Claims 4-17 each depends from independent claim 1; accordingly, when independent claim 1 is allowed, all claims depending therefrom should also be allowed. In summary, Applicant submits that the rejection of claims 1 and 4-17 under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph has been overcome, and that the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Examination and reconsideration of all pending claims as currently amended are requested. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 4-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully requested. In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Allowance of the claims at an early date is solicited. In the event that the Examiner disagrees, Applicant requests a telephone interview to more fully understand the Examiner's position and advance this case to issuance.

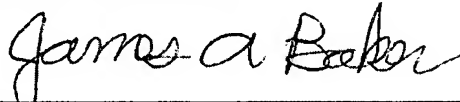
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Date

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Respectfully submitted,

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